

ships to the opening of the Kiel Canal. Several members of the Cabinet desired to decline ; but when the Tsar formally urged France to join Russia in attending the ceremony, she consented on the understanding that the ceremony would be given no political significance. This formula, needless to say, failed to disarm the hostility of the extreme Nationalists. For once the Kaiser's speeches were both tactful and eloquent. " It is not only for our own national interests that we have worked. We open the gates of the canal to the peaceful intercourse of the nations. I welcome the participation of the Powers, whose representatives we see amongst us and whose magnificent ships we have admired, with all the greater satisfaction because I think I am right in inferring from it the complete appreciation of our endeavours, the very object of which is to maintain peace." Despite his welcome to the French ships, however, he never conquered his instinctive dislike of France and the French Republic. " The Republicans are revolutionists *de natura*" he wrote to the Tsar soon after the Kiel festivities. " The blood of Their Majesties is still on that country. Has it since then ever been happy or quiet again ? Has it not staggered from bloodshed to bloodshed ? Nicky, take my word on it, the curse of God has stricken that people forever. We Christian Kings and Emperors have one holy duty imposed on us by Heaven, that is to uphold the principle of By the Grace of God. We can have good relations with the French but can never be *intime* with her ! "

A few months after the Kiel festivities the Jameson raid brought Great Britain and Germany to the verge of war. On January 1, 1896, the German Foreign Secretary visited the French Ambassador, and inquired whether France would join

in " limiting the insatiable appetite of England." He did not propose co-operation in matters calculated to endanger peace, such as the Near East, Egypt or the Mediterranean, and he explained that there was no risk of an explosion; but it was " necessary to show England that she could no longer take advantage of the Franco-German antagonism to seize whatever she wished." Herbette coolly replied that the exclusion of Egypt removed the principal reason which might induce France to join. " I do not see what advantage such a league to hold England in check would be to us if we cannot count on your support in our interests." Undeterred by this rebuff, the Kaiser despatched his fateful telegram to Kruger, but the reaction of England was so menacing that he quickly changed